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## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL



*The*  
FUTURE *of* ISRAEL

BY  
JAMES WATERMAN WISE



NEW YORK  
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY  
681 FIFTH AVENUE

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	I
II. THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH .	18
III. THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND .	43
IV. THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL .	67



# THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL



# I

## INTRODUCTION

IN Bernard Shaw's "Cæsar and Cleopatra" one of the characters when questioned as to the whereabouts of the divine Julius during a visit in Alexandria answers, "I left him in the market-place settling the Jewish Question!" Mr. Shaw, it seems to me, has here amusingly pointed out the continuity of a phenomenon which was quite as real two thousand years ago as it is to-day. That phenomenon is the Jew, constituting then, as he still does throughout the lands in which he lives, a very serious problem.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

A twofold problem! For the Jew is never, despite appearances, as much a source of anxiety to his environment as he is to himself.

Nor has the outside world, no matter how observant, seen so clearly or felt so keenly the difference between itself and the Jew as has he. Not sufferance so much as difference has been the badge of all our tribe. Difference of various kinds! Oft-times they have been religious, sometimes political, social, or cultural; always, to some degree at least racial. In one way or another the Jew has always differed from the world he lived in, has somehow maintained his distinctness from those among whom his lines were cast.

The distinctness and the difference

## INTRODUCTION

have not always been of the Jew's designing. Sometimes, it is true, the Jew has felt himself to be under a great spiritual compulsion to preserve intact the Jewish entity, the Jewish ethic, the Jewish ideal. But there have been other periods beginning with the period of emancipation when there existed no sense of the necessity of group survival, when such survival seems to have resulted from accidents of circumstances rather than from set purpose and determination.

Always, however, the Jew has persisted. Persecuted in many lands, tolerated in some, welcomed in few, the Jew has everywhere survived and always constituted a problem. Having no land or country of his own, he was often faced by the question of actual

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

versus theoretical nationality. And though for many centuries the bitter inhospitality of most of the lands in which he dwelt relieved him of this and of all other problems save that of physical survival, there have been times when the Jew felt that the soil on which he stood was indeed his, that the tongue of his adopted country might be his own, and that the state under whose laws he dwelt merited his devotion.

Then it was that the Jew felt most keenly that somehow there existed a discrepancy between his loyalties. For Judaism was never the mere acceptance of a creed or belief in dogmas. It was not even comprised in the observance of a large number of traditional customs and ceremonials.



## INTRODUCTION

There was something more. There was an added, a unique, an all-important element besides.

That element cannot adequately be described, far less defined, as racial or even national. It was neither completely the one nor the other. Yet it was more than either. It consisted of both, yet it transcended both. No mere historical memory of an age two thousand years away when all Jews were of one common tribal ancestry could have accounted for those bonds of unity which have held together in an indissoluble tie of thought and feeling the scattered descendants of an ancient people. And it is something more than the history of an old and primitive nation which has led the Jew, from the earliest settlement

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

in the Bablylonian exile to the latest re-Reformed synagogue in America, to study and inquire of, to thrill with and to glory in, a story not that of the country of his dwelling; to learn of other than Babylonian or Spanish or American heroes; to know and to care concerning a land which at times seemed so far away as to be almost unreal.

It is something far greater than the memory of a common racial background or national history, which has constituted that element in Jewish life which has caused uneasiness and wonder both to the Jew and to those among whom he dwelt. That element is to be explained rather by the fact that his racial and national background never became mere memory, never

## INTRODUCTION

seemed ancient or outworn to the Jewish mind and soul. These things have survived; they have persisted; they have increased. The unity of all Israel, the tradition of the Jewish nation, these have not been the carefully guarded memories of the past. They have been the living symbols of an ever unfolding Jewish present, the hope and promise of the unknown years ahead.

The Jew did not pause to question his racial purity. It mattered not that there had been admixtures so numerous as all but to blot out the primal stock. Nor was it of importance that the nation and land of Israel were (as it seemed) forever vanished. The Jew's sense of racial and national unity remained. His feeling for, and love

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

of what had been, transcended the centuries that intervened, and held him by a stronger than factual tie to the things of which he dreamed, to the realities which he was forever recreating in his soul.

It is this unique element in Jewish life which has constituted the real Jewish problem. Here is no case of divided or conflicting loyalties. Nothing of the crude antithesis which has so often been adduced to prove that the Jew is organically incapable of loyal citizenship. Nor, it must be noted, is the problem quite as simple as certain of the liberated Jews of the Western world have imagined. Vehemently they have sought to convince themselves and others that the term Jew is a purely religious one,

## INTRODUCTION

that its connotations are only those of belief and ritual. Vehemently they have protested but none the less vainly. Except for spasmodic intervals of super-assimilation, when fevered protest took the place of reasoned utterance, the Jew has always felt and known that besides his loyalty to any land and nation, there was in his life another loyalty, not conflicting but complementary, which would not be denied. Not opposed to, nor even beyond, but by the side of and in addition to all his other loyalties, the Jew has felt a bond and a loyalty which were uniquely his.

The bond that he felt was perhaps more than rational. It partook, as do all the deeper things in human life, of the mystic and the unexplained.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

It was not the creation of his mind nor even of his will. It sprang rather from the depths of his being, coloring not so much the surface of his thought and action as suffusing the quality and texture of his life. Subtle, yet inescapable, his Jewishness has ever remained the dominant life-motif of the Jew, as truly when he sought to deny and to escape it as when he fostered it and gloried therein.<sup>1</sup>

It is this Jewishness which constitutes the Jewish problem. This it is which makes for an emotional quality in the Jew necessarily absent in

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<sup>1</sup> This Jewishness is at once subjective and objective. For the world without rightly recognizes it in the Jew, definitely feels it to be there. And the Jew himself feels, then most when he least comprehends, its powerful reality.

## INTRODUCTION

others. And whenever, in the Western world, the Jew has been free to share in the life of the community, this quality has become apparent both to himself and others. Somehow it has marked the Jew off. In some way it has created a sense of difference and apartness which have never yet been completely overcome.

Let me make clear that by this I do not imply assent to the fantastic theory set forth in recent years that there is some psychophysical trait which in itself distinguishes the Jew from others. Of course the Jew *can* lose himself, *can* disappear. Separated from his fellow-Jews, it would not be a matter of many decades before a Jewish individual or even

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

family would lose all trace and vestige of its Jewish heritage. The phenomenon of Jewish survival is social, not protoplasmic.

As long, however, as Jews do live together in large or small groups, as long as they persist as social units, so long will there remain a Jewish problem. And Jews do live together. By choice or by necessity, by accident or by design, from the humblest Polish Ghetto to the richest and best "Jewish neighborhoods" of Berlin and London and New York, they have remained a social unit. And everywhere there is borne in upon them the feeling of some subtle difference between themselves and others, and with that feeling the need and desire to solve the great problem of their



## INTRODUCTION

Main

common life, the problem of adjustment and of survival.<sup>1</sup>

There have been many pseudo-attempts to solve the problem. The comic pathos of what Ludwig Lewi-sohn has called the Jewish Assimilationist is the outcome of one attempt. Another favorite method of dealing with the problem is the complete denial of its existence. A third solution, which has of late been suggested,

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<sup>1</sup> It must not be imagined that this question is one affecting only those elements of the Jewish group which have not yet, or which have only recently, been liberated from an almost completely ghettoized environment. On the contrary, it is rather in those Jewish circles which have moved for years within the orbit of non-Jewish thought and culture, that the problem is most acute. It is there most of all that the Jew must pause to consider the all-important problem of adjustment. For he finds that he has remained a Jew despite any and all neglect of his religious faith. What does this fact betoken, what imply?

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

is that both Jew and non-Jew tacitly agree that no adjustment whatever is possible, and that each go sternly and uncompromisingly on his way.

There have been other attempts to solve the problem. They need not be recounted here. What is of importance is that the problem exists, that it is of immediate consequence and clamorous for immediate answer. And there is an increasing number both of Jews and non-Jews who are beginning to realize that we are not at the end but rather at the beginning of an intelligent attempt to cope with the difficulty of a self-conscious minority, living in the midst of a society similarly constituted in most respects, yet differing from it in some fundamental ways.

## INTRODUCTION

Tolerance for and of the Jew, even in the broadest sense, will not solve the problem. Tolerance is merely the minimal prerequisite without which no progress can be made. But complete tolerance and all that it implies will serve only to shift the axis of the problem. It will not end it. There will still exist the sense of difference, the feeling that the Jew is not in perfect spiritual concert with the rest of the world, or it with him. There need be no conflicts, but there will be contrasts. Subtle differences will still exist long after crass difficulties have been overcome.

And because this is a problem of vital importance to Jew and non-Jew alike, we are justified in attempting to look forward into the years that

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

lie ahead, seeking for light as to what will come. We need not attempt to read the stars or prophesy concerning future events. But there are certain signs and portents which are clearly to be seen. And the future is always but a single step ahead. We are ourselves its architects. What we to-day do and think cannot wholly determine what will come, but what will come is inconceivable except as a projection of all that we have done and thought and dreamed.

It is in this sense that I would turn to a consideration of the problem: What is to be the future of the Jew? Will he survive as a distinct and separate social unit? And if he survive, what will be the form of his survival? Will he preserve and be preserved by

## INTRODUCTION

the faith, the religion of his fathers? Or will he leave it behind him as something no longer needed or of value in his development? What is to be the next, perhaps the final, passage in the unfolding of that epic which the world has come to know as Israel?

## II

### THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

No sadder commentary could be made on Jewish history during the last thousand years than to say that almost without exception its character has been determined not from within but from without. Instead of being a powerfully acting force, the Jewish soul has been constrained by the hatred and bitterness of a hostile world to react to, rather than to act upon, life. The Jewish spirit has found it necessary to exert its strength to preserve and protect itself instead

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

of using that strength to creative and purposive ends.'

As a result the Jew has learned, as no other people has ever learned, the secret of physical survival, of persistence in the face of every type and degree of persecution. Indeed had the Christian world continued in that Stygian and abysmal intolerance which characterized it for nearly fifteen centuries, there would be no particularly new or pressing Jewish problem to-day.

But a new light has dawned in the civilized world, a light which seems slowly but surely to be penetrating the thick pall of ignorance and misunderstanding that hangs over mankind. And it is this light which has con-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

fused the mind and heart of the Jew. In a medieval account of the release of some prisoners from Chillon Castle, a chronicler tells of the difficulty of men long chained in a dark dungeon in accustoming themselves once more to the light of the sun. At home in the dark, they were helpless and blinded before the faintest gleams of light.

That has been the Jewish fate. The Jew has learned how to survive under the worst conditions. The question yet to be answered is whether, after so long, he will be able to adjust himself to conditions in which his existence will not be the result of a mere reaction to an oppressive and hostile environment, but



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

in which it must depend on his own will and decision.<sup>1</sup>

The religion of the Jew is an example in point. For centuries the Jew had preserved intact, almost unchanged, the sum of religious beliefs and practices which were Judaism. Despite the longest and the intensest persecution that the world has known, the Jew changed not an iota of the essential things of his ancestral faith. But once the Jew felt that a new spirit was abroad in the world, and that he was free, without fear of torture or

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed everything that follows in this essay is based on the assumption that the progress of tolerance will cover ever widening areas, and will be felt in ever deepening intensity. And though such an assumption might, in the face of recent events everywhere, seem unjustifiably optimistic, there is surely some basis for it in what I feel to be the steady, though oftentimes interrupted, growth of the spirit of tolerance and understanding in the world.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

death or forced conversion, to examine rationally both his own faith and the faiths of those about him, the ancient orthodoxy began to give way. Changes of every sort were instituted. A complete reform of usage and observance was made in all the lands of Western Europe and in America. And the Jew, while not abandoning the name or the central concepts of his religion, sought to bring that religion in every possible way into harmony with the spirit of the new age.

Whole communities of Jews began to insist that there was no difference between themselves and their neighbors other than that of theological belief. They began to stress the importance of the Jewish religion. They made it seem all-important, belittling

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

as negligible everything in Jewish life other than its purely religious side. And this attitude toward things Jewish they handed down to their children, until in their own minds at least (for the fallacy was never wholly or even largely communicated to the non-Jewish world) the religious compulsion alone constituted the necessity for preserving the Jewish bond. Jews were content to permit the fate of Israel to hang upon its faith. They were in the best sense of the word religionists.

This generation of Jews was utterly sincere in what it did. And had its descendants remained of the same mind and spirit all might have been well. In modified form perhaps, but in essence unchanged, the Jewishness

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

of the Jew would have continued.

But a profound change has come over the westernized Jew during the last decades. The religious compulsion, the religious purpose no longer exists for him. Judaism the religion has ceased to play a vital part in his life. Despite reiterated pulpit pronouncements the emancipated modern Jew is actually quite unperturbed over the possibility that the world at large may never accept the purely monotheistic conception of divinity which has been Judaism's. He is not so sure of his own belief as to feel that he can in conscience urge others to accept it.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Not that the Jew is any nearer than he ever was to the acceptance of the theology of Christianity. He was never further away. For the truth of the matter is that the whole theological problem does not interest him very deeply.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

Nor does the Jew of to-day feel, as did his fathers long ago, that there is a great religio-social mission which rests upon his shoulders—the task of bringing peace and justice to the world. These ideals are no less dear to him than they have been to other Jewish generations. But he has come to realize that these ends cannot be attained or achieved for all the world by any one religious group. And he has admitted to himself, although the Jewish pulpit will not yet admit it, that the visions of peace and justice on earth are no longer exclusively or even chiefly Jewish possessions; that in every land and every society there are men and women just as truly devoted and passionate in their adherence to these ideals as is the Jew.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

These two fundamental concepts of the older Judaism, the concept of Israel as priest-people and witness to the unity of God, and the concept of Israel as the messenger of redemption to mankind, have broken down. They have not been denied *in theory*. They are still, though with somewhat decreasing vehemence, enunciated by the religious leaders in modern Jewry. But they have ceased to be a living force. The younger Jewish generation considers them so little *in fact* that it does not even take the trouble to deny them. And no opposition or open heresy could be so dangerous as that.

Even the fatuous complacency of the majority of the spiritual leaders in Israel has of late been somewhat

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

disturbed. The falling off of Jews from Judaism has become too apparent to be completely overlooked any longer. And as a result there have been confused conferences, discussions, questionings, all dealing with the problem: What is the matter with modern Jewish youth? What is the reason for the increasing irreligion of the modern Jew?

Seldom, if ever, is the question put in its true form; namely, what is there, or what is there lacking, in the accepted religion of Israel, whether Orthodox or Reform, which makes it impossible of acceptance to thoughtful men and women of to-day? Yet there the answer lies. For there will be not less but more of indifference and apathy on the part of the young

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

to the Judaism of the synagogue as long as that Judaism remains what it has been in the past. That is the heart of the difficulty.

Perhaps the Jew will find some comfort in the fact that he is not alone in the breakdown of his religious, or rather his theological, faith. The Christian world is faced by the same problem. For the Christianity, like the Judaism, of the past has failed to enlist the loyalty, nay even the interest of the youth of our time. The inherited dogmas of church and synagogue are alike unconvincing and uncompelling in this age. Congregations, it is true, can still be got together. Church and synagogue af-



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

fairs are still attended, or attended to. But everywhere there is lacking that fire of enthusiastic purpose which alone is capable of converting religious institutions into spiritual forces. And in the Christian church the bravest and wisest of its leaders have had the courage to face this truth. Is it not time for Jews to face it also?

Many are the reasons which are offered to explain this breakdown of religious faith and interest. Sometimes it is suggested that by pruning away some of the most obviously lifeless limbs of dogma and creed, the tree itself can be saved. That hope is vain. For the difficulty lies not in any particular usage or custom or belief. It goes far deeper. It lies in the fact that the whole subject-mat-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

ter, the stuff of which religions have always consisted, is alien to the spirit of our times. No matter how liberal religion has been, it has always revolved around belief. It has always been based on the assumption of the existence and the power of God. Its terminology has always been theological. And our age is completely divorced from any theological concerns.

That is the real difficulty which the religions of to-day must face. Judaism and Christianity have both begun with God, His supremacy, and His goodness. And both faiths, although profoundly ethical in their demands as well as in their implications, have based these demands on the validity of their theological concepts. Re-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

ligious conduct, according to Jewish or Christian dogma, followed, or was supposed to follow upon, religious faith. And faith has become decreasingly a part of modern life.

The skepticism of a Voltaire in the eighteenth century, the atheism of an Ingersoll in the nineteenth, were spectacular because they stood out as unique. They were not symptomatic. The religious indifference of to-day is not unique. It does not stand out. It is not the foible of a smart set of hyper-educated intellectuals. It is the accepted fact rather than the pronounced heresy of the lives of millions, and these millions, be it noted, the most thoughtful and intelligent in all lands.

For religion, as it has been pre-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

sented to them, is based on belief. And they simply do not believe. Many of them would like to. Many of them look with envy upon the "perfect faith" which was their fathers'. But they cannot share it. And since religion is couched in terms which are not only meaningless but incomprehensible to them, they will have none of it. Religion, defined as it is, in terms of belief and theology, does not even touch the sphere of their life and thought.

These are the facts that lead me to the conviction that Judaism the religion cannot survive. For Judaism, Orthodox or Reform, is frankly based on theological belief, even on an intensely personal theological conception. And on all such matters the

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

modern Jewish mind has ceased to dwell. The religion of the Jew will no longer suffice to preserve his Jewishness.

I would not for a moment, however, leave the impression that the Jew is or will be without religion. Religion has always had two aspects, that of belief and that of conduct.<sup>1</sup>

And while the ultra-fundamentalists of all ages and faiths have insisted that right conduct was impossible except when arising from correct belief, mankind has generally known better. Certainly it sees to-

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed it was almost the greatest spiritual achievement of the Jew that, in an age when belief constituted almost the entirety of religion, he learned and taught mankind that right belief alone was valueless; that right conduct and action must be its unfailing accompaniment.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

day that while throughout history lofty and ennobling beliefs have sometimes led to high and noble living, they have not always done so. And on the other hand there are innumerable examples of untutored and savage men and women who have done such deeds, and ordered their lives in such a way, that believers in the more highly developed faiths and creeds could have learned much from them.

No, despite the fundamentalists, right conduct is an art and a science in itself. Religious conviction, when it is present, should and often does promote it. But religious conviction does not condition it. Right conduct rests on convictions of all sorts. Not only theological but social, personal,

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

and other motives may be responsible for it. As an instinct and an impulse, it exists among children and savages as well as among churchmen. Truth and love, loyalty and devotion, are found where the Paternoster and the Shema were never heard of. They are the real foundations of religion. Without them, as Isaiah pointed out in ancient Israel, belief and ritual are less than nothing. With them, as we are learning to-day, there is no absolute need either for ritual or belief.

It is in the recognition of this fact that there is to be found the basis of what will be the religion or religions of the future. For the virtues and qualities which religion has sought to stimulate in man no longer seem to

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

be the adjuncts and the results of faith merely, but fundamentally independent thereof. And as this becomes even more apparent, will it not be the business of religion, which is becoming less and less insistent, *in fact*, upon the importance of theological belief, to admit the truth *in theory also*? Will it not be the duty of religion to reorder its house, not upon the doubtful basis of theological and heavenly assumption but upon the firmer foundation of human capabilities and needs?

Religion, instead of beginning with the assumption of God and working down to man, will begin with man and human nature, and end wherever man's highest nature leads. It will deal in human terms with human



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

beings. It will busy itself with the earthly, not the heavenly springs of human conduct. It will preach the spirit and the soul of man, not apart from the body nor as something nebular and unsubstantial, but as the indwelling and motivating energy of life!

Such religion will probably be without either creed or dogma. But it will not be without life. For its very essence will consist of the essence of life. Its main purpose and "excuse" will be to help man to answer worthily the supreme question of his days: How shall life be lived? With what aims? By what standards? According to what plan? The religion of the future will in truth be the science of life.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

Whether or not the name "religion" will be retained is a matter of doubt, though of little real importance. Bearing in mind the original meaning of the word, it would be a misnomer. But religion has already changed so often and so much in its meaning, has so altered its ancient connotations, that it may conceivably weather this new change as well.

Another matter of interesting speculation, bearing more closely on the problem with which we are dealing, is the attitude of the established faiths to this new conception of religion. At first in all probability they will oppose it bitterly. To do so will be in keeping with the traditional attitude of all established religions toward change and progress. Yet

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

little by little it will win its way. A new generation of religious leaders will come to see that it offers the only foundation for religion acceptable to the thought and feeling of our times. And they will accept it. For in the end the choice will lie between its acceptance and the gradual disappearance of all religious forces as they exist to-day.<sup>1</sup>

I have spoken so far of religion generally rather than of Judaism or Christianity, because the problem in both cases seems to me to be at bot-

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<sup>1</sup> Let me make clear that, by speaking of the religion of the future as one of love and loyalty, truth and devotion, I do not mean to imply that all religious groups will or should merge into one. Indeed it is more likely that each group will, in its own way and according to its own genius, develop and enhance those common spiritual purposes which will in time come to replace the old theological differences.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

tom the same. Both religions are based on the same fundamental assumptions, derive their authority in the same way. And both, in their present form at least, will have to go. The only difference is that in the case of the Jew the breakdown of his religion will have a more far-reaching consequence than in the case of the non-Jew.

For in the minds of most of the emancipated Jews of the Western world their religion is synonymous with their Jewishness. They have been led to believe that the two are interchangeable. And when they finally discover, as some of them have already begun to do, that, long after they have openly as well as actually abandoned all concern in Israel's

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

monotheistic faith, they still remain Jews both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others, there will be before them the necessity of complete social and spiritual reorientation.

Judaism alone has never really constituted the Jewish bond, has never, save in theory, been interchangeable with Jewishness. Even when religious belief and ritual observance were the most sacred duty and joy of the Jew throughout his exile, there was something stronger even than these which bound him to his fellow-Jew. How much less in this day, when belief and ritual among Western Jews have decreased almost to the vanishing-point, can the existence and strength of the Jewish consciousness be explained as religious.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

To say that in the past Jewish consciousness expressed itself largely through religious channels, is to evade the important truth that the Jew of to-day is finding those channels closed. Channels they may once have been. To-day they appear rather to be blind alleys out of which the Jewish soul seems incapable of finding its way to light and freedom. What then? Will Jewish life stand stagnant until it evaporate, and the Jew disappear? Or will that peculiar quality and characteristic, which, for want of a better name, I have called Jewishness, evolve into some new form of social and spiritual life?

### III

#### THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

Any discussion of modern Jewish life must take into account a factor which did not exist a generation ago, and which has only during the last decade come to be a vital and even determinative element in the composition of the Jewish problem. That factor is the rebirth of a Jewish life in Palestine, an event of such importance to world Israel that it has already altered in some fundamental aspects the nature and character of the whole Jewish problem.

Indeed the very possibility that

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

Palestine might become again a Jewish land shook Jewish life to its depths. It kindled a hope in the hearts of millions of oppressed and persecuted Jews who were hopeless. It gave courage and a new self-respect to the soul of Israel in places where that soul was borne down by shame and anguish. It created a vision and a purpose in the Jewish heart which for centuries had known no vision but of the past, no purpose but that of physical survival. And let us be frank! It filled with fear and trembling those Jews of Western lands whose chief Jewish loyalty and love consisted in frenzied proclamations that they were even as those among whom they dwelt, a religious sect and nothing more, a pious but impotent



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

memory of an ancient land and faith.

All this the mere possibility of a Jewish Palestine brought about. And this is but the beginning. For it is impossible as yet to grasp the full significance of the New Palestine in Jewish life. The historians of the future must tell that story. Yet close as we are to the event, we cannot but sense the powerful influence which the return of Palestine to the Jew, and of the Jew to Palestine, is having and will have on Jewish life.

And if we care to look ahead, attempting to foresee something of the future of Israel, nothing could be more important than an understanding, first, of what has been done in and for Palestine in recent years, and, second, of the momentous significance

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

which a Jewish Palestine will inevitably have for the rest of the Jewish world.

Zionism, or the will to create a Jewish State in Palestine, is, as has often been pointed out, nothing new. It is as old as the dispersion. The memory and love of Zion were never eradicated from the Jewish mind and heart. They have persisted always, though varying in intensity perhaps, with the varying intensity of the bitterness of Jewish life. For it has been in the darkest hours of the Jewish night of anguish that there shone brightest and most unquenchable the star of hope whose message was of the return to Israel's land, of the re-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

birth of Israel's soul. And only in the last centuries have there existed communities of Jews in the Western world, the ease of whose existence has led them to forget Zion, and to cease to feel any bond between themselves and their people's ancient land.

For one thing Palestine could not be forgotten by the Jew. It was too closely bound up with his religious faith, with his belief in the ultimate coming of a Messiah, under whose guidance the scattered remnants of the house of Israel were to return to the redeemed land of their fathers. Even as late as the eighteenth century great masses of Jews believed that this would actually come to pass, and that they themselves would live to witness it.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

But with the first signs of the inevitable breakdown of the Messianic beliefs of Orthodox Judaism, and as the enduring reality of their dispersion and exile became apparent to them, the Jews of the world, though they continued to repeat prayers for the restoration of Israel to Palestine, began to think of such an occurrence as too remote for anything more than pious wishes.

Two influences restored Palestine to the category of vital possibilities. The one was intellectual, the other physical. In the last decades of the nineteenth century Jews began to revolt against the servile imitation of everything non-Jewish, which had been for many years the fashion in Jewish life. Jewish literature, Jew-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

ish art, indeed a completely Jewish culture, began to seem desirable rather than disreputable ends. The Jew arose to stand bravely on his own feet. And just at this very time there came about the most terrible outbreaks of bitterness and persecution to which Jews had been subject for centuries. Eastern Europe, particularly Russia, ran red with Jewish blood. Out of this two-fold Jewish agony, the protest of the Jewish body against physical destruction, and the protest of the Jewish soul against spiritual self-surrender, there came into Jewish life the comfort and the challenge which are Palestine.

The man under whose inspiration and leadership the new Zionism came into being was Theodor Herzl. A

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

prophetic and heroic figure, his voice proclaimed as none other had done that there must come to the people of Israel a national renaissance, and that that renaissance must take place in Israel's historic home, which should again become the center of Jewish life. The plight of the Jew was such, thought Herzl, that he could not afford to await a highly problematic Messianic deliverance, and the subsequent establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. He must immediately bend every nerve to the supreme effort of creating in Palestine a political commonwealth, which should serve as a haven of refuge for the persecuted Jews of the world, and which should, by the very nature of

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

its composition, be dominantly Jewish in its ideals and character.

It was as if Herzl had spoken not as one man but with the voice of a people. Hardly had his volume "The Jewish State" been published, when he became the central figure of the greatest Jewish movement in history. Opposition he had in plenty. But the idea, which he had grasped and voiced, caught and has ever since held the passionate interest and devotion of the Jewish masses everywhere. Herzl and his dream of a Jewish Palestine seemed to have come almost miraculously as an answer to the cry of physical and spiritual anguish which had gone up from them.

That there were difficulties to be

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

overcome neither Herzl nor his most ardent followers denied. On the political side, the Turkish government then in control of Palestine would have none of Herzl nor of his Zionism. And even were it possible to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, it could never hold more than a fraction of the Jewish population of the world. It could not solve the Jewish question. It might, on the contrary, even intensify it.

In the face of these and of many more difficulties, however, Zionism persisted. Tirelessly until his death Herzl wrote and spoke and wrought in order to bring before the peoples of the world the justice of the Jewish demand that the opportunity be given to Israel to reclaim its ancient land.



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

Perhaps no one, not even Herzl himself, realized how soon his dream was to come true. In 1914 England declared war on Germany and on her ally, Turkey; in 1917 General Allenby, in command of a British army, captured Jerusalem and drove the Turks out of Palestine. Some days earlier Lord Balfour, writing on behalf of the British Government, had declared that England viewed with favor the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Two years thereafter the nations of the world officially ratified and approved the action which Great Britain had taken. Palestine was again to become a Jewish land.

The Jews of the world were not slow to respond to their great oppor-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

tunity. Thousands of young Jewish men and women bade farewell to the lands of Eastern Europe, in which they had dwelt under inconceivable hardships, and set their faces toward the "old-new" land of Israel. The Jews of America and England, who did not need to flee to Palestine in order to live in security and with dignity, felt that they, too, must take part in the upbuilding of their people's land, must give of their substance to help those who were returning. And a new era began both for Palestine and for all Israel.

All that has been done in Palestine within less than a decade, the rebirth of the Jewish people on Jewish soil, I cannot recount here. But some picture of the land and of its people

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

must be given. For they and their achievements are indicative of what may be expected in and from Palestine.

Even before the Balfour Declaration there had been Jews who felt that they must go to Palestine to lay the foundations of the Jewish state, to act as the outposts of the new Jewish return to the land. Dwelling in scattered colonies, oftentimes under the most difficult conditions, these early settlers dreamed of the time when the waste places that constituted most of the land should be reclaimed, when the bleak hills and the barren valleys of the land should be alive with great numbers of Jewish men and women. And despite all obstacles they toiled on with courage and consecration un-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

limited. They builded better than they knew, for their little settlements became the outposts and the framework which the pioneers of another generation were to develop and carry on.

And in Jerusalem there were groups of pious Jews who had come to Palestine, not because it was the land of their people's future, in which they wished to live, but because it was the land of their people's past wherein they wished to die and to be buried. And that was all. Beyond this handful of Jews, Palestine was a series of waste places, sparsely inhabited by migrant Arab communities who dwelt in the ruined villages and cities of bygone days. This was the land that had been promised as the Jewish

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

Homeland, the soil on which Israel was to erect a Jewish state.

The epic story of the new Palestine will some day be written. The inflexible purpose and will of the Jewish pioneers of the first decade, their persistence in the face of every hardship, their courage in meeting every danger, these will some day be recounted. But it is meet here rather to tell the facts of what has been accomplished than to praise the heroism and devotion which lie back of them.

The land has been made healthful. Palestine is no longer a plague-spot. The Jewish population of the land has trebled in the last six years. There are now over 150,000 Jews in Palestine, which has a larger proportion of Jewish inhabitants than any other

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

country of the world. And to meet this great influx of settlers there have been organized over a thousand industries of many different types.

The score of colonies which existed before the war has increased until there are now over a hundred places where Jewish men and women are learning to cultivate the land and make it bear fruit. At least one large city has been founded, the city of Tel-Aviv. Schools and hospitals have been built throughout the land. A common language, the ancient Hebrew tongue, has been revived. And perhaps most significant of all, a great Hebrew University has been established.

These are, however, nothing more

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

than a few of the physical manifestations of the rebirth of the Jewish soul in Palestine, while the true achievements of the new Palestine are spiritual. For it has brought into the lives of those Jews who go there to live a new beauty and a new dignity. There is a new light in their eyes, a new song in their hearts. And as they go they seem to be touched by a high sense of consecration. The work which they have undertaken is not for them alone. They are laying the corner-stone of the new structure of Jewish life. And they feel that they must lay it well and true. They feel themselves to be more than settlers in a new country. They are the trustees for Israel of Israel's

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

land. They are engaged upon the holiest of adventures, the adventure that is Palestine!

And even as the Jews who have gone back to Palestine feel that Palestine does not belong to them alone, that it is more than a haven of refuge, more even than the foundation of the Jewish state, so have the Jews of the world come to feel that they, too, must bear their part in the upbuilding of Palestine. The adventure is theirs too. For the present, they realize that Palestine is in large part dependent on them. They know that the Jews of Palestine have asked nothing for themselves, but that in the upbuilding of the land they have called upon their fellow-Jews everywhere to take part. Not to give as a



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

matter of charity, but to stand by as an act of comradeship in a common task. For Palestine is to-day not only the possession of all the Jewish people. It is their task and test as well.

Whether in Russia or in France, in England or in America, the Jew is a part of all that is being done and dreamed in Palestine. Because of the very nature of the Jewish bond, the responsibility for Palestine rests on all Israel. This the Jew knows to be true, and he knows also that the world at large is waiting only to see how, after centuries, the Jew will meet and carry his great responsibility.

Of one thing Palestine already gives assurance. Though much that is to be achieved in Israel's land must remain hidden in the darkness that

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

envelops the future, a Jewish Palestine makes certain that within one land at least the Jewish identity will survive. And with its assured survival in Palestine, a new element enters into Jewish life. That element is the growing consciousness that there is to exist once again a civilization which shall be dominantly Jewish, a life and culture which shall be frankly and completely Hebraic.

What the effects of that consciousness will be on Jewish life elsewhere, how it will affect the attitude of Jews, both in regard to the outside world and to themselves, I shall presently attempt partially to predict. But whatever other effects it may have on Jewish life, one thing seems certain. After almost two thousand years of

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

Jewish exile, Palestine is once more to become what it has already begun to be in part, the central point of Jewish interest, of Jewish effort, of Jewish inspiration. It is to become again, as one of the builders of the New Zion has put it, a central national home for a roving spiritual ideal.

The question very naturally arises at this point as to the type of religious faith which will predominate among the Jews of the new Palestine. Will Judaism, the chiefest glory of ancient Israel again flourish in the land of its birth? Or will the Jews of Palestine, like the Jews of America and of those other lands where Judaism does not survive chiefly as a reaction to oppression, find that the religion of

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

their fathers is no longer adequate to meet their spiritual needs?

It is impossible as yet to say with certainty what form the spiritual activity of the pioneers of the land will take. But this much is already clear. The orthodox piety which for so many centuries characterized the Jewish life of those lands whence most of the settlers come will play no part in the rebuilding of Palestine. A few of the older type of orthodox Jew have, it is true, come to Palestine now that the gates have been opened. But they have come because they wish to die rather than to live in the land of Israel. Their faces and their hearts are set not towards the future but towards the past.

But to the great mass of young

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S LAND

Jews, upon whom will rest the chief burden of creating and directing the new Jewish renaissance, the sanctions and traditions of orthodox Judaism are neither meaningful nor binding. The ritual and the ceremonies which were practiced by their parents they have discarded. For they do not share the beliefs on which these rested.

Indeed the attitude of the new Palestine on questions religious is in close accord with that of the Jewish youth of all lands to-day. The builders of Palestine recognize the inefficacy of the older type of Judaism in meeting the spiritual problems that beset them. They do not, however, therefore deny the value, even the necessity of conscious spiritual forces in the molding of the life of the land.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

All they insist upon is that these spiritual forces shall not be merely a passively accepted legacy from the past, however precious, but shall arise, even as prophetic Judaism once arose, out of the actual spiritual needs of the land and of its people.

## IV

### THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

Thus far, I have spoken of Palestine as a land of Jewish hope, as a place of Jewish responsibility, as an adventure in Jewish idealism. All these it is. All these it will increasingly become. Yet there is a further aspect, another relation in which Palestine stands to the Jewries of the world, which is of even greater importance and of more far-reaching consequence than any of these others. For Palestine is far more than a focus for the converging interests and energies of world Israel. It has already

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

begun to be what in time it will be predominantly, a dynamic and radiating center of influence which will affect and mold Jewish life everywhere.

Indeed the most important aspect of the new Jewish life in Palestine is the part which it will play in ordering Jewish events through the diaspora. It is Palestine, not as the object of world-wide Jewish thought and effort, but Palestine as a creative power in Jewish life, of which I speak. In other words, the future of Israel seems to me to be inextricably bound up with the future of Palestine. I would not offer Palestine as "the solution" of the Jewish problem anywhere, but I do venture to predict that Palestine will, and not in the distant future, become a largely de-



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

terminative element in Jewish life everywhere. Just as Palestine to-day depends materially, at least, on the Jewries of the world, so the time is coming when the Jewries of the world will depend for intellectual and spiritual sustenance on Palestine.

It cannot be otherwise. For while the Jewish communities of Western Europe and America persist in their present comatose complacency, there are being created in Palestine new forms of life and thought, new flowerings of the Jewish mind and soul, an ethic and a culture which are again distinctively Jewish. One finds them everywhere: in the determined efforts of the settlers to create a social order which shall reflect the spirit if not the letter of the prophetic pas-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

sion for justice; in the eagerness with which young and old alike seek to revive and to recreate the ancient Jewish customs and festivals, giving them new and vital significance; in the scholarly and scientific research into every discoverable detail of the ancient life of the land; even in the songs and games by means of which it is sought to link up the lives of the children with the memories and traditions of ancient Palestine.

These things are not yet complete. To eyes that will not see, they do not exist, for they are still only in the process of evolution. But those who know the old land and the new people of Israel, who have seen the miracle of national redemption and rebirth, do not doubt. They see, with

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

an insight that comes of love, the beginnings of a new life, completely Jewish in its origin, pulsating with the spirit of Jewish history and tradition, and carrying that history and tradition into new and even undreamed-of fields.

And when once this new energy causes itself to be felt outside of Palestine, it will affect and alter the course of Jewish life throughout the world. Imperceptibly at first perhaps, but with increasing intensity, the character of the new Jewish life in Palestine will permeate and color the quality of all Jewish life. Not that the Jew of Berlin or London or New York will ever accept or even adopt the standards or customs of Jewish life in Palestine. That that

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

will come to pass is indeed unlikely. But the consciousness that, in one part of the world at least, there is a Jewish way of life, that there does exist a people the essence of whose being is as distinctively Jewish as that of his neighbors is distinctively Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon, cannot but affect the Jew everywhere.

What the effects of that consciousness will be it is hard to tell. In some Jews, it will arouse no nobler sentiment than that of annoyance or resentment. For there are always Jews who are Jews, not because they wish to be but because they cannot help themselves. For them, in the future as in the past, their Jewishness will be merely a crushing burden of which they cannot be rid. They will accept

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

and carry it merely because they are unable in fact to repudiate it, but it will play no positive or helpful part in their lives.

But to the great majority of Jews everywhere, the breath of the new Jewish life in Palestine will come as a wholesome and revivifying force. Touching their relations with the outside world, it will enkindle a new self-reverence and self-respect. They will feel their oneness not only with a hallowed and sacred religious memory but with a glorious and valiant spiritual adventure. The fact of a Jewish life in Palestine will lend a new dignity to the position of the Jew in every land.

Palestine, however, will render an even greater service to the Jew than

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

this. For much as it may help him in his relations with the outside world, it will do even more to create and to maintain a new spirit within himself. It will, for one thing, furnish a cultural and intellectual interest which has been wanting for generations in Jewish life. It will provide a terribly needed outlet for that Jewish soul-force which in past generations took the form of religious piety, but which in recent years has lost its power, because it found no suitable channel through which it could express itself. And finally Palestine will serve as a center to which Jewish energy everywhere will be directed, and from which world Jewry will draw strength and inspiration.

Would that this forecast could end

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

on so hopeful a note! But thoughtful prophecy has seldom been optimistic, and in the outlook for the future of Israel there is at least as much to be feared as hoped. I have tried to point out those effects for good which a Jewish life in Palestine will have on Jewish life elsewhere. But these are not the only results which may be expected. If a Jewish Palestine does not actually offer good as well as evil in its train, it certainly presents some very grave perils which Jewish life must face.

Of these perils, two at least have already been made manifest. They affect one another. Indeed they are part of the same psychological process or condition. The Jew has been called an idealist. (I do not refer to

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

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the well meant but usually nauseous praise-phrase with which philo-Semites seek to comfort the historic pariah among nations.) And temperamentally he is one. By that I mean that in his intellectual, in his spiritual life, the Jew is an adventurer. He is not bound by the conventions of what he knows and sees. He is given to the search and the pursuit of the far off, the unknown. Whatever he may be in the world of commerce and of daily toil, once that world has been left behind him (and Jews are still rare who dwell only therein), the Jew is hardly ever a realist. In the world of thought and spirit his soul ventures forth unafraid, "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." He is not



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

cribbed, cabined, or confined by the bounds of actuality or facts. He soars above and beyond them.

It is this Jewish trait which during centuries of inhuman persecution kept alight the Jewish spirit in courage and in hope. True, the medieval Jew might be driven from his home at an hour's notice. Torture or death might be a part of the next day's happenings. But was there not another, a truer world to contemplate, in which to live? The *Olam Habah*, the world to come, with all its beauty and its promise, was inhabited just as truly by the Jew of the past as was the world of anguish and of terror in which he actually dwelt. Practical reality the Jew always recognized, but

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

never as the ultimate reality. Always he lived in a world of his own making.

The Jew's aptitude then for living in a world of his own creating, while he ignored the world about him, is still his. That aptitude preserved the spirit of the Jew, but at the same time enervated it. It created an appetite for pleasant, if unsubstantial, dreams, which has not abated.<sup>1</sup>

And it is that same appetite which makes of Palestine, for those Jews who do not go there to live, a dangerous as well as an ennobling influence. For, as Palestine produces a

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<sup>1</sup> That appetite, for example, manifested itself in the pathetic delusions of those Jews of the Western world who imagined that by Anglicizing or Teutonizing their religious customs, they could wipe out all distinctions between themselves and others.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

culture, a literature, a polity of its own, there will come to Jews everywhere who have not wholly lost their Jewish consciousness, an interest, even a fascination in their people's land which may eclipse all other interests in their life. Herein lies the danger. To know and to care about Palestine is the duty and the privilege of Jews throughout the world. But for Jews to dwell physically in any land *outside* of Palestine, and to live and move and have their intellectual and spiritual being *in* Palestine, would be disastrous. For it would serve neither Palestine nor those Jews who love it, to substitute, for the interests and problems of the world in which they actually live, the problems and the interests of Palestine. The tragic

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

conditions which made a similar phenomenon in the Dark Ages explicable, and even necessary, are no longer present.

Yet it is no improbable occurrence of which I speak, something barely within the realms of possibility. On the contrary. It is already evidenced in more than one way and place. Not only in the lands of Eastern Europe, but in this land as well, there are Jewish circles and Jewish groups, the main interest and purpose of whose existence is to be one with the new life in Palestine. They do not plan actually to migrate thither, nor are they, save indirectly, aiding in the upbuilding of the land, yet to all intents they might as well be living in Palestine as in America. Palestine

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

has become their *Olam Habah*, their world of retreat, of unreal reality.

And while in many cases there lies back of this phenomenon a loyalty and a passion for Israel, the intense beauty of which is beyond praise, there is in the phenomenon itself much to give us pause. First, because it will unfit such Jews to take their rightful and needed place as citizens, in the truest sense of the word, of the lands in which they dwell. Second, because the interest and love for Palestine of American or English Jews must complement, not supplant, their love and interest for England or America. Without either interest and love, their life will be incomplete.

And there is a second danger in

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

the too great absorption of the Jew in the life which is to grow in and out of Palestine. For if the Jew of other lands allows himself to be completely engrossed in the cultural, the intellectual, the social life of Palestine, he will of necessity rebuild from within a new Ghetto of Jewish life and thought. And that were tragic! While it is desirable, even inevitable, that the Jews of Palestine should create a life as distinctively Jewish in character as that of Germany is Teutonic, or England is Anglo-Saxon, it does not follow that the Jew elsewhere can, or should, share that life. The land of his dwelling, at least when that dwelling is voluntary, must be the land of his fundamental interests and social values. Any other

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

state of affairs in Jewish life would be deplorable. The Jewry of the world must never again live in an intellectual or spiritual Ghetto, even though the name of that Ghetto be Palestine!

The problem which the Jew faces is still a difficult one, and yet it is only, though in aggravated form, a part of the problem of all life, one of adjustment. That Palestine, the reality, the adventure, the dream, will greatly influence all Jewish life there can be no doubt. Yet the Jew of the diaspora must learn to think of and for Palestine, and still not let it dominate all his existence. It must be a vital, never the sole influence in his life.

That such adjustment will be diffi-

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

cult to achieve is more than likely. For just as the religion of the Jew supplied the consciously and intellectually unifying element in all Jewish life in the past, so the Jewish Palestine that is to be will supply it in the future. I stress the words "consciously" and "intellectually" because the unifying element in Jewish life is in reality far more deep-seated than anything which could have been supplied in the past by a common religious belief, or than can be supplied in the future by the possession of the land of Israel.

For whatever the conscious or intellectual results or developments of the Jewish bond may have been or may become, the bond itself is primarily and fundamentally *emotional* in char-



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

acter. The Jew does not *think* nearly so much as he *feels* his Jewishness. When once he feels it he may proceed to rationalize and to develop it in a number of ways. But it is important, in order truly to understand Jewish life, to realize that both Judaism, the so-called Jewish bond of the past, and Zionism, its latter-day substitute, are not causes but effects; that they are merely the visible, tangible results of an emotional process which conditions them.

It is that emotional process and all that it implies which constitutes the real Jewish problem. For it is that emotional process which makes inevitable the survival of the Jewish group. What the form of its survival will be is not so sure. But certain

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

factors in the situation stand out clearly. The breakdown of the authority and meaningfulness of Judaism as a religion has in the last decades left the Jews of Western Europe and of America without conscious outlet for the expression of the innate Jewishness of their lives. This deficiency, which has already largely impoverished Jewish life, has in some ways been remedied by the impetus of the new Jewish life in Palestine and its effects on Jews everywhere. But Palestine, as has been pointed out, is not alone capable of supplying the existing deficiency in Jewish values; nor can it be forgotten that in its own way Palestine presents some very grave problems as well as great possibilities.

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

In what way then, it may be asked, will the Jewish group continue, if the ancient religious bonds no longer bind, and the new national bonds must not be suffered to take their place? The answer is to be found, I believe, in the very nature of Jewish life. Primarily emotional in character, that life has always expressed itself through social channels. Jews have always lived together, worked together, dreamed together; as much because of inner as of outer compulsion.

And it is out of this social solidarity that there will arise the *conscious* Jewishness of the future. Its character will be frankly and completely cultural and social, though it will doubtless be influenced both by the religionism of the Jewish past and

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

the nationalism of the Jewish future. It will be steeped in Jewish tradition, in Jewish customs, in Jewish history. It will vary according to varying Jewish conditions, and the details of its character will be determined by the character of the social life of the Jewish community, which in turn will continue in all probability to depend largely on the social life of the community as a whole.

Thus what I have called the unique historical phenomenon of Jewishness will go on. For the Jew there will still exist, the twofold, though not conflicting loyalty. The sense of the extra bond will still remain. And just as that phenomenon was never one which in the past brought either understanding from without nor

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

complete happiness within, so, too, in the future it will give rise to serious difficulties.

There is no solution of the Jewish problem. Because of the events of history, because of the unalterable character of the Jewish past and the constitution of the Jewish spirit, it must go on. The Jewish problem is no nearer solution to-day than it was in the days of Julius Caesar. That the problem could not be eliminated by external oppression and persecution, the world at large has long since learned. That it cannot be solved by servile self-denial and self-obliteration, the Jew is rapidly learning for himself. The great mass of Jews will not disappear. They will not lose their identity, nor are they

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

likely to be able to impose nor to desire to impose that identity on others. They are, they will remain, a group apart. Not hostile nor opposed to, but in some very definite though not always definable ways, they will continue distinct and different from the rest of the world.

The really significant question does not concern the fact of the survival of the Jew. That is assured. What is important, and not so sure, is the effect which such survival will have both on the Jewish and non-Jewish groups. What will be the qualitative influence on Jew and Gentile of the difference and distinctness of which I have spoken? It is impossible to say. Were one to judge the future by the past, there would be more to fear than

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

hope. For the age-long persecution of the people of Israel brought in its train a two-fold legacy of woe and shame.

The persecuting world has paid for the anguish it inflicted on the Jew by the bitterness and hatred and brutality which its own actions engendered in itself. And the Jew himself, though physically persisting through the centuries, has not come spiritually unscathed from the long years of oppression and contempt. His survival has cost him dear in more ways than one. And while the coarser forms of conflict between Jews and non-Jews may soon come to be classified with other forms of ancient barbarity, there is no assurance that a new and subtler sort of antagonism may not

## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

take their place. To a large extent indeed, it has already begun to do so. For group antipathies outlive both their causes and their excuse.

But there has come into human affairs a new and better tendency—the effort of some men of all groups and races to understand and to welcome, rather than to condemn and to obliterate, differences between themselves and others. Without this tendency the possibility of a mutually helpful rather than a hurtful relation between Jew and Gentile would be very remote indeed. With it there are at least some grounds for hope. But even taking it into consideration, the truth must be faced that many painful centuries will of necessity elapse before this tendency becomes, if in-



## THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL'S SOUL

deed it ever becomes, the dominant factor in the relationships of different social groups.

In the meantime it is this tendency which is the brightest spot on the horizon of Jewish, as well as world affairs to-day. For if once it be accepted as a fact that the Jewish group, the Jewish people, even the Jewish problem, is not to disappear but is to go on as a distinctive part of the composite life of the world, there may once again come into and through the life of Israel much that will be of value both to itself and to all mankind.

THE END



















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